EACTS POSITION ON THE INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE IN THE FIELD OF CARDIO-THORACIC SURGERY

Marko Turina

Chairman, International Cooperation Committee of the EACTS

Cardio-thoracic surgeons in the Western world, especially when well established in their practice, or when reaching retirement age, often perceive themselves under social pressure to develop some charitable actions, preferably in the Third World countries. This is a laudable activity, from which a small group of selected patients might profit; on the larger scale, such periodic visits rarely result in a major improvement in the local facility. EACTS is sometimes approached for a bigger help in supporting some local institution; there is also a disappointment and even reproach when large-scale financial and personal aid is not forthcoming.

EACTS Council wishes to clarify our position in this matter:

- Activities of individuals in the Third World or in the developing nations are strictly personal matters, and are performed without EACTS funding, organization or oversight.
- EACTS cannot (and is financially unable to) accept the responsibility for the running of a cardio-thoracic centre in a Third World or in a developing nation. This remains the domain of professional charitable organizations, some of which are remarkably successful in their activities.
- EACTS primary role is educational. In the field of international assistance, it is presently represented by the Bergamo School, by the Visiting Scholarships, and by the EACTS Teaching Courses in Advanced Techniques in cardiac and thoracic surgery, and in the Applied Science Course.
- Transfer of knowledge remains one of the primary goals of the EACTS: recruitment of high-level scholars for surgical and scientific teaching, and the assistance in science projects, remain our main activity.